

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 170576
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 /023 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:AF/C:REGRIBBIN

APROVED BY:AF/C:EMARKS

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R 211933Z JUL 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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FOR SIETZ

FOLLOWING BANGUI 1500 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO YAOUNDE
PARIS NAIROBI JULY 19, 1977 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGUI 1500

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CARR, CT, US

SUBJ: APPARENT DETENTION OF WESTERN JOURNALISTS

REF: STATE 167239, 167330

1. EMBASSY HAS BEEN UNABLE TO GET RESPONSE FROM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS TO OUR REQUEST FOR ACCESS TO DETAINED AMERICAN JOURNALIST
JONATHAN RANDALL. BELIEVE THAT DEPARTMENT SHOULD CALL IN CASE
AMBASSADOR AS PROPOSED STATE 167330.

2. WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER FOREIGN MINISTRY IS ENGAGING IN DELAYING
TACTICS OR WHETHER IT IS CASE OF BUREAUCRATIC INEFFICIENCY.
EMBASSY DIPLOMATIC NOTE MARKED TRES URGENT REQUESTING ACCESS TO
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RANDALL FOR EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER WAS DELIVERED TO MINISTRY
AT 10 A.M. LOCAL JULY 18. EMBASSY MESSENGER TRIED TO DELIVER NOTE
TO SECRETARY GENERAL BUT WAS TOLD TO GO FIRST TO THE REGISTRY BY
A CLERK WHO PROMISED TO BRING THE NOTE DIRECTLY TO SECRETARY
GENERAL. WHEN CHARGE CALLED THAT AFTERNOON, SECRETARY GENERAL STILL
HAD NOT RECEIVED NOTE, AND IT WAS CLEAR THAT MINISTRY WAS TAKING NO
ACTION WITHOUT NOTE. SECRETARY GENERAL WAS ABSENT MORNING OF JULY

19, SO CHARGE PROTESTED ABOUT DELAY TO CHEF DE CABINET AND REQUESTED APPOINTMENT WITH THE MINISTER.

3. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE TOLD CONSULAR OFFICER JULY 18 THAT HE WAS NOT AT LIBERTY TO DISCUSS CASE AND THAT ANY ANSWER WOULD HAVE TO COME THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

4. POST ALSO DISCUSSED THE PROBLEM JULY 18 WITH THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND WITH THE ECONOMIC COUNSELOR TO THE EMPEROR (GUY DARLAN, TO WHOM THE AMBASSADOR HAD ALREADY MENTIONED THE JOURNALISTS' VISIT). BOTH EXPRESSED GENUINE SURPRISE AND CONCERN ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE APPARENT DETENTION. THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS VIRTUALLY CUT OFF FROM HIS MINISTER, WHO WAS SPENDING ALL HIS TIME AT THE IMPERIAL COURT. IN ANY CASE, HE NOTED, A RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST FOR ACCESS COULD ONLY COME FROM THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

5. WE ALSO INFORMED THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION ON JULY 16 OF THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TWO JOURNALISTS. HE WAS CERTAIN THAT INFORMATION MINISTER YONGONGO, WHO HAD MET THE TWO JULY 14, WAS UNAWARE OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

6. WASHINGTON POST'S MESSAGE TO BOKASSA GIVES US NO PROBLEMS AND MAY BE HELPFUL IN VIEW OF PHYSICAL SEPARATION OF GOVERNMENT AND IMPERIAL COURT. SMITH UNQUOTE VANCE
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Message Attributes

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Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTION, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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